

# WAS THE ROMAN ARMY

PROVIDED WITH ANY

## MEDICAL OFFICERS ?

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Qui vivos potui mulcere dolores  
Deficio, medicasque manus fomentaque quaero  
Vulneribus.

EDINBURGH :

SUTHERLAND AND KNOX, GEORGE STREET.

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LITTLE knowledge has been transmitted to us regarding the commissariat of the Roman army. In none of our common works on Roman antiquities, as in those of Rossini, Kennet, Adams, Smith, Ramsay, &c., is there any allusion made to the question, whether or not the Roman troops were provided with medical officers. Nor does there exist, as far as I am aware, in the Roman classics, any distinct reference to the subject. I have also in vain searched among Roman medical authors, and among the writings of the Greek physicians who practised at Rome, for any direct notices, relative to the medical or surgical care of the numerous and scattered armies which Rome employed in the different quarters of the world. In fact, the only passages, with which I am acquainted, relating at all to the subject, consist of a casual remark in one of the military epistles of Aurelian; two incidental legal observations contained in the law writings of Modestinus, and in the Codex of Justinian; and a reference by Galen to the opportunities for anatomical observation presented to the physicians during the German wars.

The reference to the medical superintendence of the army by Aurelian, occurs in Vopiscus' Life of that Emperor, chap. vi. In issuing some peremptory orders regarding the discipline of the army, after enumerating various rigid rules which the soldiers were to observe, Aurelian concludes with the following admonition and announcement :—" Let each soldier aid and serve his fellow ; let them

be cured gratuitously by the physicians (*a medicis gratis curentur*) ; let them give nothing to soothsayers ; let them conduct themselves quietly in their hospitia ; and he who would raise strife, let him be lashed.”<sup>1</sup>

When treating of those who, by absence from Rome, &c., were exempted from some burthens and taxes, the jurist, Modestinus, who wrote in the earlier half of the third century, mentions, among others, the military physicians (*Medici Militum*), “because,” he adds, “the office which they fill is beneficial to the public, and ought not to be productive of any injury to themselves, (*quoniam officium, quod gerunt, et publice prodest, et fraudem eis adferre non debet.*)”<sup>2</sup>

In Justinian’s *Corpus Juris Civilis*, Lib. x. Tit. 52, there is a series of laws, “*De Professoribus et Medicis.*” The first of these laws exempts the Physician of a Legion (*Medicum Legionis*) from civil duties when absent in the public service.<sup>3</sup>

The passage I have alluded to as existing in the works of Galen, is to be found in Liber iii. cap. 2, of his work, “*De Compositione Medicamentorum pro Genera.*” In there discoursing regarding the treatment of wounds, he talks of the necessity of a knowledge of human anatomy for their proper management. In order to know the anatomy of man, he recommends here, as elsewhere, the anatomy of the monkey to be studied, observing that without such knowledge you cannot take due advantage of the opportunities that you may accidentally have presented to you of becoming acquainted with the anatomical structure of human bodies. And he adds, in consequence of a want of this knowledge the physicians (*οι ιατροι*) employed in

<sup>1</sup> *Scriptores Historiæ Romanæ*, Tom. ii., p. 402. (Heidelberg edition of 1743.)

<sup>2</sup> *Corpus Juris Civilis Digestorum*, Lib. iv., Tit. vi., Leg. 33, Sec. 2, p. 142. (Leyden Edit., 1652.)

<sup>3</sup> “Cum te *Medicum Legionis secundæ adjutricis* esse dicas, munera civilia quandiu reipublicæ causa abfueris, suspicere non cogeris. Cum autem abesse desieris, post finitam eo jure vacationem, si in eorum numero es, qui ad beneficia medicis concessa pertinent, ea immunitate uteris.”—*Ibid.* Lib. x. ; Tit. 52, p. 855.



the German wars, and having the power of dissecting the bodies of the barbarians, did not learn more than the cooks understand.<sup>1</sup>

This paragraph, though indistinct as regards the status and office of these *ιατροι*, is still sufficiently explicit as to the fact that there were physicians in the Roman army during the German wars that Galen alludes to, and which wars probably were those that occurred in the reign of Marcus Aurelius, immediately previous to the time at which Galen wrote the work from which we have quoted.

The history of other more ancient governments than that of Rome is not without allusion to the office of army physicians. Homer,<sup>2</sup> Herodotus,<sup>3</sup> and Pliny,<sup>4</sup> each comment on the number and fame of the medical men with which the kingdom of Egypt abounded. In describing the status and character of the Egyptian physicians, Diodorus Siculus specially states that, when engaged in military expeditions, the soldiers were treated medically, without fees; for the physicians received a salary from the state.<sup>5</sup>

Nor is the old classical literature of Greece without reference to surgical services tendered to the soldier in war. Homer describes the double character of army surgeons and warriors as com-

<sup>1</sup> Quemadmodum nec *medici* bello Germanico, barbarorum corporum insectionis potestatem habentes, amplius quippiam didicerunt eis quæ coqui intelligunt.—*Kuhn's Edit. of Galen's Works*, vol. xiii. p. 604. Celsus speaks of the possibility of studying human internal anatomy by looking at the wounds of soldiers, &c. “Interdum enim gladiatorem in arena, vel *militem in acie*, vel viatorem a latronibus exceptum sic vulnerari, ut ejus interior aliqua pars aperiat.”—*De Medicina*, lib. i. p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> See *Odyssey*, Lib. iv., v. 229, &c.

<sup>3</sup> *Euterpe*, II., § 84; *Thalia*, III., § 1 and 132.

<sup>4</sup> *Historia Naturalis*, Lib. xxvi., c. i. Pliny states that the Egyptians even prosecuted the study of morbid anatomy by dissection:—“In *Ægypto*, regibus corpora mortuorum ad scrutandos morbos insecantibus.”—Lib. xix. c. 5. Galen advised those who desired, in his day, to become acquainted with human osteology to repair for that purpose to Alexandria, for this potent reason, that there were two actual human skeletons preserved in that city. See *Kühn's Edit. of Galen*, vol. ii., p. 220.

<sup>5</sup> In expeditione bellica absque mercede curantur; medici enim annonam ex publico accipiunt.”—*Bibliothecæ Historicæ* (Amsterdam Edition of 1746), vol. i., p. 92. Lib. i., § 82.

bined in the persons of Podalirius and Machaon. And when the latter is wounded, he puts into the mouth of Idomeneus the well-known expression (*Iliad*, lib. xi. v. 514), that the medical man is to the army more valuable than many warriors; knowing as he does how to excise arrows,<sup>1</sup> and to apply soothing medications,—

Ιητρος γαρ ανηρ πολλων ανταξιος αλλων,  
'Ιους τ' ἐκταμνειν, επι τ' ηπια φαρμακα πασσειν.

In order to learn the best methods of extracting war-weapons, and to acquire dexterity in the treatment of accidents, the author of the ancient Greek treatise *Περί Ιητροῦ*, usually included in the works of Hippocrates, advises the young physician to attach himself for a time to some army, for the purpose of acquiring practical skill.<sup>2</sup>

In the earlier periods of Roman history and Roman warfare, the treatment of the military sick and wounded was, in all probability, trusted to the casual care of some fellow-soldiers whose tastes and inclinations had led them to pay more than usual care to the rude surgery which existed at the time. But, as early as the commencement of the Christian era, we find Celsus laying down distinct, and

<sup>1</sup> Homer describes three different methods by which war-weapons were extracted; viz., first, by evulsion, or traction of the weapon backwards, as in the case of Menelaus (*Iliad*, Book iv., v. 214); secondly, by protrusion, or pushing the instrument forward, as in the case of Diomedes (*Iliad*, Book v., v. 112); and, thirdly, by enlarging the wound, and cutting out the weapon, as was the practice of Patroclus in the case of Eurypylus (*Iliad*, Book xi., v. 218). Homer does not allude to any internal medical treatment, except once (*Iliad*, Book xi., v. 638), when he mentions a mixture of Pramnian wine, cheese, and flour, as having been administered by Hecamede to the wounded Machaon. (See Eustathius' *Commentarii in Homeri Iliadem*, *loc. cit.*; and Dr Adams' *Paulus Ægineta*, vol. ii. p. 426.) Plato, in his "Republic," discourses as to whether the potion of Pramnian wine, &c., given to Machaon (whom by mistake he names Eurypylus), was not too inflammatory in its character. See *Works of Plato*, Bohn's Edit., vol. ii. p. 87.

<sup>2</sup> The treatise in question, though usually printed amongst the Hippocratic works, is not admitted to be genuine by any of the translators or commentators upon Hippocrates, with the exception of Foës. See Dr Adams' *Works of Hippocrates*, p. 121.



in many instances very excellent and practical precepts, for the extraction of war-weapons from the bodies of the wounded<sup>1</sup>—as of arrows, spears, leaden bullets (*glandes plumbeæ*), &c.

Occasionally the weapons used in ancient war seem to have been forged for the special purpose of rendering their extraction by the surgeon a matter of difficulty and danger. At least we find Paulus Ægineta complaining that some of them have “their barbs diverging in opposite directions like the forked lightning, in order that, whether pulled or pushed, they may fasten in the parts.”<sup>2</sup>

Still, let me repeat, neither in Celsus nor in Paulus Ægineta, nor, indeed, in any other ancient medical work, have we, as far as I know, any allusion to the circumstance of surgeons or physicians being regularly appointed as army medical officers in the Roman army, for the purpose of superintending the treatment of the wounded, or, what is of still greater importance, in order to take professional care of the soldiers disabled by sickness and disease, and whose number in warfare is generally far greater than the number of those that are disabled in fight.

Modern military experience has, in many instances, proved the high importance of the services and superintendence of a medical military staff; and not so much in reference to the care of individual cases, and the cure of the wounded, as in reference to the general health and consequent general strength and success of whole armies. In fact, in war the devastations produced by sickness and disease have often been found greatly more formidable and fatal than any devastations produced by the sword; fevers, dysenteries, and other distempers of the camp, have carried off far more soldiers than the ball or bayonet; malarious and morbific agency has sometimes terminated a campaign as effectually as the highest military strategy; armies have occasionally, in latter times, been as

<sup>1</sup> See Lib. vii. Cap. v. “Telorum ejectio.”

<sup>2</sup> Dr Adams' Translation, Book VI., Sec. lxxxviii., p. 418.

completely destroyed by the indirect ravages of disease as by the direct effects of battle.

Nor was the experience of the Roman armies in this respect different from our own. When the Emperor Septimius Severus determined to subdue the whole of Scotland, he, about the year 208, led, according to Herodian and Dion Cassius,<sup>1</sup> an army of not less than 80,000 men across the Forth, marched them north, apparently as far as the Moray Frith, and thence returned to York. But though, in this course, the Roman Emperor nowhere met the enemy in open fight, he is stated to have lost, in this single campaign, not less than 50,000 of his troops. The marshes, fens, woods, &c., of Caledonia were more destructive to its Roman invaders, than were the long swords (*ingentes gladii*) and other lethal weapons borne by its warriors.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Xiphilin gives the following account from Dion Cassius of the various difficulties and disasters encountered by Severus, from the rivers, marshes, woods, straganems, &c., of the Caledonians :—" Severus quum vellet omnem in suam potestatem redigere, ingressus est in Caledoniam, eamque dum pertransiret, habuit maxima negotia, quod silvas cæderet, et loca alta perfoderet, quodque paludes obrueret aggere, et pontes in fluminibus faceret. Nullum enim prælium gessit, neque copias hostium instructas vidit, a quibus proponebantur consulto oves bovesque ; ut quum ea nostri raperent, ac longe de via declinarent, facile opprimerentur. Ad hæc nostris aquæ valde oberant dispersisque ; insidiæ parabantur ; quumque non possent iter facere, occidebantur a suis, ut ne ab hostibus caperentur. Itaque mortui sunt è nostris ad quinquaginta millia."—P. 305. Severus himself seems to have suffered in his health during this Scottish campaign ; for, during the most of it, he required, says Dion, to be carried, on account of his weakness, in an open litter (*nam plurimum propter imbecilitatem operta lectica vehebatur*, p. 305.) Both Dion (p. 307) and Herodian (p. 153) mention his sufferings from gout ; but the term (*imbecilitas*) used by Dion, would scarcely seem to indicate merely an attack of this special affection.

<sup>2</sup> Herodian's account of the labours and difficulties of Severus in this campaign, sufficiently indicates the sources of malaria and disease to which his army was subjected, and, at the same time, affords a curious statement regarding the condition and habits of the ancient Caledonians :—" Severus' first care (says Herodian) was to throw bridges across the morasses, that his soldiers might be able to pursue the enemy over the dangerous places, and have the opportunity of fighting on firm ground ; for as the greater part of the island is frequently



We know, from the oft-repeated anecdote told by Pliny, that, in the early days of republican Rome, the practice of medicine was not encouraged among the inhabitants of the Eternal City. But, in the later periods of the empire, Rome abounded with native and foreign physicians; and when we find the Roman people exalted in so many branches of art and knowledge, we could not but expect that common experience and results, like that of Severus, would have suggested to them the propriety of increasing the

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overflowed by the tides, these constant inundations make the country full of lakes and marshes. In these the barbarians swim, or wade through them up to their middle, regardless of mud or dirt, as they always go almost naked; for they are ignorant of the use of clothes, and only cover their necks and bellies with fine plates of iron, which they esteem as an ornament and sign of wealth, and are as proud of it as other barbarians are of gold. They likewise dye their skins with the pictures of various kinds of animals, which is one principal reason for their wearing no clothes, because they are loth to hide the fine paintings on their bodies. But they are a very warlike and fierce people, and arm only with a narrow shield and spear, and a sword hanging by their naked bodies; unacquainted with the use of habergeons and helmets, which they think would be an obstruction to their wading through the ponds and marshes of their country, which, perpetually sending up thick gross vapours, condense the air and make it always foggy.”—Hart’s *Herodian*, p. 153, 154. Dion Cassius, who lived at the date of Severus’ expedition, gives, when describing the expedition, an account of our Caledonian ancestors that is in no degree more flattering. “The Caledonians,” says he, “both possess rugged and dry mountains, and desert plains full of marshes. They have neither castles nor towns; nor do they cultivate the ground; but live on their flocks and hunting, and the fruits of some trees; not eating fish, though extremely plenteous. They live in tents, naked, and without buskins. Wives they have in common, and breed up their children in common. The general form of government is democratic. They are addicted to robbery; fight in cars; have small and swift horses. Their infantry are remarkable for speed in running, and for firmness in standing. Their armour consists of a shield, and a short spear, in the lower end of which is a brazen apple, whose sound, when struck, may terrify the enemy. They have also daggers. Famine, cold, and all sorts of labour they can bear, for they will even stand in their marshes, for many days, up to the neck in water, and, in the woods, will live on the bark and roots of trees. They prepare a certain kind of food on all occasions, of which, taking only a bit the size of a bean, they feel neither hunger nor thirst.—*Xiphilin’s “Excerpta,”* p. 304; and *Pinkerton’s “Inquiry into the Early History of Scotland,”* vol. i. p. 438.

strength and success of their armies, by having medical men to watch over the health of the soldiers that were fighting in so many different regions under their banners.

Some modern discoveries in Great Britain and elsewhere, show that such a conjecture is not at variance with truth, and that the Roman armies were provided, at all events in the time of the Empire, with a medical staff.

Housesteads, in Northumberland (the ancient Borcovicus), formed one of the principal stations on the great defensive wall which the Emperor Hadrian reared, in the second century, from the Tyne to the Solway. Many Roman remains have been found at Housesteads.<sup>1</sup> Thirty years ago an embellished monumental tablet was discovered among these remains. This tablet was, according to the inscription upon it, raised by the first Tungrian cohort to the memory of their *MEDICUS ORDINARIUS*. The accompanying plate represents this interesting relic, which is preserved in the Newcastle Museum. The inscription upon the tablet reads as follows, in its contracted and in its extended forms :—

D            M  
ANICIO  
INGENUO  
MEDICO  
ORD COH  
I TUNGR  
VIX AN XXV

D[IIS]    M[ANIBUS]  
ANICIO  
INGENUO  
MEDICO  
ORD[INARIO] COH[ORTIS]  
[PRIMÆ] TUNGR[ORUM]  
VIX[IT] AN[NIS] XXV

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<sup>1</sup> See Gordon's "Journey through Scotland," p. 75. Bruce, in his work on the "Roman Wall," p. 214, speaks of the ancient city of Borcovicus as likely, when excavated, to prove "the Pompeii of Britain." Stukeley, in a similar spirit, declared it the "Tadmor of Britain."



And I append Mr Bruce's translation of it :—"Sacred to the gods of the shades below. To ANICIUS INGENUUS, Physician in Ordinary of Cohort the first of the Tungrians. He lived twenty-five years."<sup>1</sup>

The first Tungrian Cohort, which erected this monument over the grave of their young physician, distinguished itself under Agricola, at the battle of the Mons Grampius.<sup>2</sup> It was afterwards, as we learn from some legionary inscriptions, engaged at Castlecary in erecting there a portion of the more northern Roman wall of Antoninus, which ran from the Forth to the Clyde.<sup>3</sup> Subsequently it was stationed at Cramond, near Edinburgh, and there raised an altar to the *Matres Alatervae* and *Campestres*.<sup>4</sup> Still later, this Cohort was stationed in Cumberland; and latterly at Housesteads, in Northumberland, where the monument we allude to, and several others, were erected by them.<sup>5</sup>

The youth of this military physician is remarkable. He died at twenty-five.

The title, "MED. ORD.," "*Medicus Ordinarius*,"<sup>6</sup> may perhaps suggest the idea, that there were more than one medical officer attached to the Cohort; otherwise the distinctive term "*Ordinarius*"

<sup>1</sup> The Roman Wall : a Historical, &c., Account of the Barrier of the Lower Isthmus, extending from the Tyne to the Solway, p. 228.

<sup>2</sup> Vita Agricolæ, cap. 36 (Orellus' Edit., Vol. ii., p. 441.)

<sup>3</sup> Stuart, in his "Caledonia Romana," p. 340, gives a copy of a legionary tablet found at Castlecary, and states that the first Tungrian Cohort had erected 1000 paces (mille passus) of the wall.

<sup>4</sup> Horsley's "Britannia Romana," p. 205. Stuart's "Caledonia Romana," p. 164.

<sup>5</sup> According to Horsley, it was probably under the reign of Marcus Aurelius that the Tungrian cohort became stationed at Castle-steads, in Cumberland, where they erected an altar to Jupiter. Lastly (he adds), this cohort settled at Housesteads, where we have six or seven of their inscriptions under four of five different commanders. Here they seem to have continued till the lowest time of the empire. The "Notitia" places this Cohort at Borcovicus (Housesteads).—*Britannia Romana*, p. 89.

<sup>6</sup> It is possible the word may be a contraction for *ordinatus* (appointed), and not for *ordinarius*.



would probably not have been used. It looks as if it were in contradistinction to “*Extraordinarius*,” or some similar designation.

The elaborate nature of the carving of this monumental tablet affords the strongest evidence of the esteem and respect in which this young physician was held by his Cohort. In fact, it is more ornamented than many of the altars raised in this country by this and other Cohorts to the worship of their Gods.

It has been suggested by Mr O’Callaghan<sup>1</sup> that the animal represented on the monument is a hare, and that it was selected as an emblem characteristic of the watchfulness of the profession to which ANICIUS INGENUUS, belonged. The Rev. Mr Bruce supposes, more correctly, the figure to be that of a rabbit; and he conjectures that it had some reference to the worship of Priapus—a kind of myth to which antiquaries have too often referred anything that appeared unusually mysterious. The whole device is, in all probability, far more simple in its signification. The *cuniculus*, or rabbit, when found on ancient Roman monuments and coins, is generally held by archæologists and numismatists as the recognised emblem of Spain,<sup>2</sup> as, for example, on the coins of Sextus Pompey and Galba; and the circular bucklers or *cetræ* which are placed in this tablet, on either side of the animal, are equally strong characteristics of the same country. And there can be little doubt that these devices indicate merely that this young military physician was of Spanish birth and origin.

A few monumental and votive tablets have been discovered in other parts of the old Roman world, affording further evidence of the Roman troops being provided with a medical staff. In the great work of Gruter, there are copies of five inscriptions in which the physicians of cohorts (*medici cohortum*) are mentioned. There is preserved at Rome a votive tablet dedicated by SEX. TITUS ALEXANDER, physician to the fifth Prætorian Cohort (MEDICUS CHO V.

<sup>1</sup> United Service Journal for 1841, vol. iii. p. 124.

<sup>2</sup> See Eckhel’s *Doctrina Numorum Veterum*, vol. i. p. 8, and vol. vi. p. 495.

PR) to Esculapius and the safety of his fellow-soldiers.<sup>1</sup> Another tablet, with a similar votive dedication, bears the name of "SEX. TITIVS MEDICVS COH. vi. PR."<sup>2</sup>

The tablets to which I have hitherto alluded all refer to one rank of medical military men, namely, the surgeons of cohorts. It is generally believed that each cohort consisted of about 500 or 600 men, though this appears to have varied at different times; and ten cohorts formed a Roman legion.<sup>3</sup> From the preceding tablets, each cohort seems to have been provided with at least one medical officer, if not more. I have, however, already cited a law from Justinian's Codex, shewing that there were military physicians to the Roman legions, as well as to the individual cohorts of which the legion was composed. The evidence of monumental tablets affords similar proof, that over the whole legion another, and in all probability a superior, medical officer was placed. At all events, one monumental tablet has been discovered, dedicated not to the *Medicus Cohortis*, but to the *Medicus Legionis*. It was raised by Scribonia Faustina to the manes of her dear husband, L. CÆLIUS ARRIAN, physician to the Second Italian Legion, and who died at the age of forty-nine years and seven months. The inscription in the original runs as follows:—

D                      M  
L. CAELI ARRIAN  
MEDIC. LEGIONIS  
II. ITALIC. QUI. VIX. AN  
XXXXVIII. MENS VII.  
SCRIBONIA FAUSTINA  
CONJUGI KARISSIMO.<sup>4</sup>

In a previous page, it has been stated that nowhere in the Roman classics does there exist any distinct allusion to physicians or sur-

<sup>1</sup> Gruter's *Inscriptiones Romanæ*. Tom. i., p. lxxviii., fig. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. lxxviii., fig. 2. See also Ibid., p. 108, fig. 4.; and p. 269, fig. 3, where references are made to two others.

<sup>3</sup> "In Legione sunt Cohortes decem."—*Cincius in Aulus Gellius*, xvi. 4.

Gruter's *Inscriptiones Romanæ*, Tom i. p. 633, fig. 5. The exact age of



geons as forming a regular part of the commissariat of the Roman army. There are several references, however, in ancient medical and classical authors to the fact of medical men being placed in professional attendance upon the Roman Emperors during the course of their military campaigns. Galen tells us that he himself was summoned in this capacity to attend upon the Emperors M. Aurelius and L. Verus at Apuleia during their proposed campaign against some of the German tribes.<sup>1</sup>

A medical author (whom Galen often quotes), Scribonius Largus, has left a valued therapeutical work "*De Compositione Medicamentorum*." This work was written, as we are informed in the preface to it, when the author was absent from Rome, and deprived of the greater part of his library. In his *History of Medicine*, Sprengel states, but I know not on what precise authority, that the work in question was composed by Largus when he was absent with the Emperor Claudius during his short campaign into England.<sup>2</sup> Our countryman, Sir Thomas Browne, makes a similar statement. In his "*Hydriotaphia*," when discoursing on the want of Roman notices regarding the state, habits, &c., of the ancient Britons, he observes, "We much deplore the loss of that letter which Cicero expected or received from his brother Quintus, as a resolution of British customs ; or the accounts which might have been made by Scribonius Largus, the physician, accompanying the Emperor Claudius, who might have

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the dead, not as to years only, but as to months, as in the above tablet, and sometimes even as to days, is a feature peculiar to Roman monumental inscriptions. And nothing appears to us more strange and interesting in relation to Roman monumental tablets, than their total and absolute silence as to a future state and the possibility of meeting beyond the grave. Out of the almost innumerable Roman monumental inscriptions that have now been copied and published, not one, as far as I am aware, refers in even the most distant way to the hope of a future existence. They seem to have looked upon the idea of living in a future state of being as poetical imagery only, and not reality.

<sup>1</sup> Kühn's Edit. of Galen, vol. xiv., pp. 649, 650.

<sup>2</sup> *Histoire de la Médecine*, vol. ii., p. 54 (Jourdan's Translation). "Scribonius Largus vivait sous le règne de l'Empereur Claude, qu'il suivit dans ses campagnes d'Angleterre."



discovered that frugal bit of the old Britons (mentioned by Dion) which, in the bigness of a bean, could satisfy their hunger.”<sup>1</sup>

We have already had occasion to allude to the disasters which attended the Scottish campaign of Severus, and to the imperfect health of the emperor himself during his invasion of Scotland. The evidence of Herodian further shows us, that during it he was attended by his own physicians, and that their conduct after the emperor's return from Scotland to York, whilst in the highest degree commendable as regards their faith and duty to the emperor, proved the cause of their own downfall and destruction. The anxiety of Caracalla for the death of his father Severus is well known. We have the testimony of Herodian to the fact, that while the father and son were living at York, Caracalla at one time attempted to destroy his father with his own hand. The same historian further informs us, that the unhappy son attempted to induce the medical attendants of Severus to adopt means to hasten the emperor's death.<sup>2</sup> He adds further, that in consequence of the

<sup>1</sup> Wilkins' Edition of his Works, vol. iii. p. 467.

<sup>2</sup> “*Medicis ministrisque conaretur persuadere, senem ut e medio quam primum quoquo modo tollerant.*”—Lib. iii., p. 412. The Emperor Marcus Aurelius died in Pannonia, when prosecuting a war against the German tribes. Dion Cassius alludes to the physicians who were in attendance upon Aurelius during this long campaign, when adverting to the report that the emperor's death was caused by them, in order to promote his son and successor, Commodus (“*peremptus a medicis qui Commodo gratificabantur.*”—Excerpta, p. 252). But Capitolinus, the principal authority regarding the biography of Aurelius, does not allude even to the report. On the other hand, he describes Aurelius' fatal illness as one of seven days' duration, and the emperor only dismissed Commodus from his presence on the last day, lest he should communicate the disease to him. (“*Septimo die gravatus est ; et solum filium admisit ; quem statim dimisit, ne in eum morbus transiret*”—Scriptores Historiæ Romanæ, vol. ii., p. 298.) The death of Pansa, the consul, at the battle of Mutina, in the year B.C. 48, is detailed by Suetonius and Tacitus in such a way as proves that Glycon attended the army as surgeon to Pansa, and took professional care of the consul when he was wounded. In fact, Glycon was thrown into prison, after Pansa's death, upon a suspicion of having poisoned his wounds. (See Tacitus' Annal., Lib. i., cap. 10 ; Suetonius' Octavius, cap. 11.) M. Brutus, in a letter to Cicero, begs the interference of Cicero in favour of Glycon, and pleads his innocence of the deed imputed to him. (Cicer. ad Brut. 6.)

court physicians not complying with his unrighteous request, Caracalla, immediately after the demise of Severus, commenced his reign of bloodshed and terror by putting to death these recusant physicians of the late emperor.<sup>1</sup>

In the retrospect, it affords a strange subject of meditation for us in the nineteenth century, to consider that, some fifteen hundred years ago, it thus happened at York, that a number of physicians were themselves doomed to death for refusing to pervert their professional trust so far as to become the murderers of the royal invalid who had confided his health and life to their care. And the modern physician may look back with some degree of pride upon the fact, that in an age and at a court where cruelty and corruption held unrestrained sway, some members at least of the medical profession remained so uncorruptible as to endanger and sacrifice their own lives rather than tamper with that of their patient.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Lib. iii., p. 413. "Nam et medicos supplicio affecit, quod sibi parum obtemperaverant, jubenti senis maturare necem." This, as stated in the text, was one of the first, if not the first, act of cruelty which Caracalla committed after Severus' death. Dion affirms that, after murdering his brother Geta, he ordered about 20,000 of Geta's supposed friends to be put to death; and amongst others, he condemned to death, according to Spartian, a class which is medically not uninteresting—namely, all those who wore amulets or charms about their necks, for the cure of agues, a custom which would appear to have been much in use both among the Greeks and Romans.—See Hart's Herodian, p. 177.

<sup>2</sup> As a further not uninteresting record of the habits of these times, as contrasted with our own, let me add (though the topic is not altogether medical), that after Severus died at York, worn out, according to Herodian, more by grief than by disease (*moerore magis quam morbo consumptus*), his body was burned, and the ashes left by the corpse inclosed in an urn of alabaster with perfumes (*odoribus*).—Herodian, p. 413. His sons, with their own hands, lighted the funeral pile. Dion states that shortly before his death, Severus sent for the urn that was destined to contain his ashes, and addressed it in terms too truly significant of the vanity and emptiness of the highest human ambition and the greatest earthly success: "*Tu virum capies quem totus orbis terrarum non cepit.*"—Dion, p. 307.